

great words to enter. I'm not sure who introduced Thomas Paine ("These are times that try men's souls...") or John Donne's "...ask not for whom the bell tolls" and I can't remember which teacher liked Hemingway or Mark Twain, etc., etc., but of this I am sure--my elementary school, junior high school and high school teachers played the major role in getting me interested in words. Miss Cofer and Miss Wilson were the catalysts by insisting on classroom performance. I owe all my teachers a great debt and by singling out those with the most impact, I do a disservice to all the remaining outstanding scholastic sculptors of the mind.

Our high school principal, Miss Nora Self, was a legend in her own time. As I recall, the school activity/cafeteria building was named for her while she still managed the high school. Not too many honorees get a building named for them while they are still living and employed at the given institution honoring them. I suspect Miss Self compiled the most favorable record of total number of students entering to the total number of students completing high school of any principal anywhere. She never gave up on a student and she never allowed dysfunctional behavior to balloon up into something serious. In so doing--rules' violations, behaviorial problems, petty crimes, etc.--were squelched in such a way that she removed any challenge by students to her authority. Her's was a rare gift; she never met a person who didn't like her. I'm sure she came as close as anyone can to the reverse (never met a person she didn't like). In addition to her abilities as a social engineer--building and rebuilding character, personality, self-esteem and whatever else was required to produce competent graduates--Miss Self was a tireless administrator. I doubt if she ever missed an after school-hours-event of any significance. Her working day, more often than not, extended until the last dance was played at Nora Self Hall following a home athletic event. She gave equal support to debate teams, musical groups, school actors, band formations and her many subordinate workers. The City of Camas really got a bargain when the school board hired Nora Self. She accomplished the work of at least three people, did so with ease, and I'm sure enjoyed every minute of it. If any teacher's absence had to be filled, Miss Self competently stepped in and provided the instruction for that day. I personally owe her a very large debt of gratitude; I only wish I had made the effort to so advise her while she was still active in her academic leadership role.

As a member of the bench brigade during the 1941 football season, I had gathered more than my share of splinters. Coach Ragsdale had allowed me to be an understudy to Warren Collins in the tailback position of our double-wing "Erickson System"⁶. With the exception of two plays in the

⁶ Walter Erickson, long-time Camas coach who had developed his double-wing system. One supposes our new coach would rather have installed his own system.